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PFLAG
COUNCIL OF
NORTHERN ILLINOIS

Open Doors

opendoors@pflagillinois.org

February 2024

POWER OF PFLAG

PCNI accomplished a lot last year!

We adopted new PFLAG branding, made and distributed over 6000 buttons, implemented an online store, made new friends with ERG groups at several companies, raised funds in front of Sidetrack bar in Chicago on Mother's Day and at Pride at the Pier, hosted tables at many local Pride events, had the largest attendance ever at the Chicago Pride Parade, welcomed two new chapters into PCNI, attended the PFLAG National Convention, broke records in membership and donations, and received two generous grants from donors (AbbVie and Synchrony).

All these accomplishments are due to the amazing team of volunteers from PCNI chapters who work on our committees and initiatives. You are the force that keeps PFLAG going. The power of PFLAG is in your hearts and minds, your kindness and friendship, your ingenuity and dedication to our mission of building a better future! Thank you on behalf of all PFLAG members!

Power of PFLAG... This leads me to our 2024 news and projects.

Power of PFLAG is the name of the fall PCNI conference that will take place on October 26, 2024 at Morton Arboretum. More details will be coming as we get closer to that date.

Several chapters have new, energetic and talented leaders – it was a pleasure to welcome them at the quarterly PCNI meeting in January.

We were also happy to welcome our newest chapter – **PFLAG Geneva/Tri-Cities**. See their self-introduction on page 5 and consider joining the chapter if you live in the neighborhood.

PFLAG Oak Lawn has dissolved after two years of suspended meetings. We thank its leaders for helping many families over the years.

We are excited to launch a big new project – **Synchrony Scholarship**. Please see the next page for information, encourage young LGBTQ+ students in your family and social circle to apply, and spread the word about the scholarship through your connections.



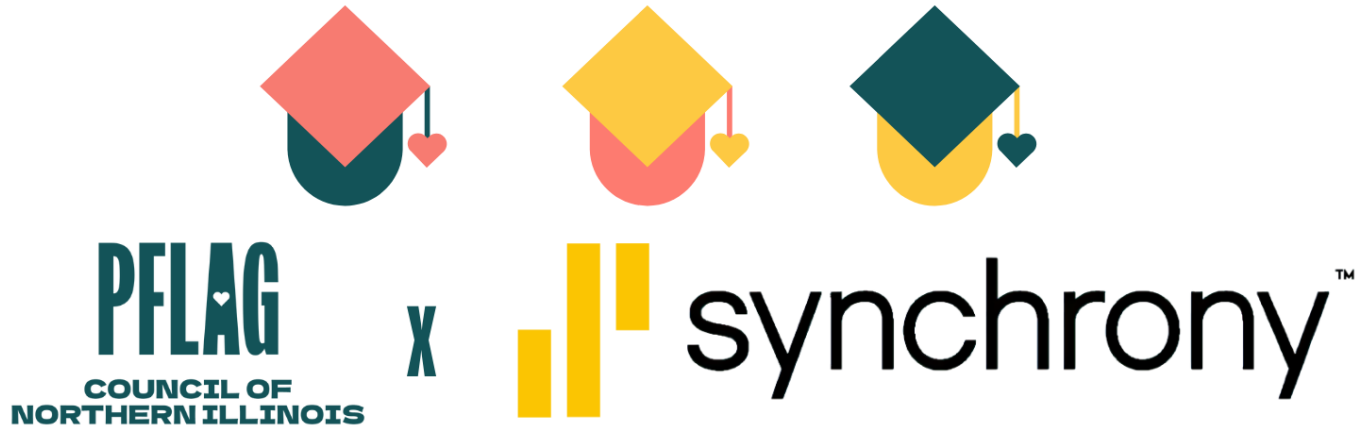
We are looking for volunteers to participate in planning and conducting the following events this year:

- Love from PFLAG Parents Fundraiser in front of Sidetrack, Chicago on Mother's Day, May 12
- Pride at the Pier, Chicago on June 29
- Chicago Pride Parade 2024 on June 30
- PCNI Conference 2024 on October 26
- Making buttons for outreach events
- Hosting tables at outreach events
- Projects organized by your chapter – we have funding for new and more ambitious initiatives by PCNI and every chapter thanks to a grant from the AbbVie Foundation

Step up and volunteer! Even a few hours of your time can make a big difference. Be the Power of PFLAG!

Andrew Zanevsky (he/him)

PCNI President



The Synchrony Scholarship is a \$2500 unrestricted scholarship for Illinois LGBTQ+ undergraduate, graduate, and continuing students from 17 to 28 years of age with the purpose of encouraging LGBTQ+ people to continue their educational and career aspirations after high school. All responses are confidential.

This application will close after March 30, 2024.

The Synchrony Scholarship is made possible by a generous grant from the Synchrony Foundation and the Synchrony Pride+ Network in partnership with the PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois (PCNI). Synchrony's Education as an Equalizer program is an initiative to expand access to higher education, skills training in high-growth fields, and financial literacy for underserved communities and its own workforce.

If you have any questions, please contact info@pflagillinois.org.

**Access more information
and the application by scanning
or going here:**

<http://tinyurl.com/sbbpnvy5>



This month, we are publishing only positive news on this page, because we all need some joy and cheer! It's been a difficult year for many in our community, but it's also been a year of incredible support and outpouring of love.

COURT MATTERS

Federal judge rules suit challenging Alabama's ban on medically necessary care for trans youth may proceed. On December 26th, U.S. District Judge Liles Burke denied a request from the Department of Justice to put the Alabama case on hold until appellate courts decide to hear related cases.

Federal judge blocks Idaho's ban on medically necessary care for trans youth. HB 71, which was scheduled to take effect on January 1st, is enjoined from being enforced after Federal Judge B. Lynn Winmill granted a request for an injunction from families of two transgender teens receiving gender-affirming care. Had HB 71 gone into effect, it would have punished Idaho doctors who prescribe puberty blockers, hormones, and other treatments to transgender youth with up to 10 years in prison.

Biden administration allocating \$700,000 for sex education program for trans boys. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recently approved a \$698,736 grant to California's Center for Innovative Public Health Research to help fund the sexual health program Girl2Girl to make it more trans inclusive.

STATE MATTERS

Record number of anti-LGBTQ+ bills were introduced in state legislatures in 2023, with 84% kept from passing. At least 510 anti-LGBTQ bills were introduced in state legislatures across the United States last year, nearly tripling the total number of such bills from 2022. Of these, 84 bills were signed into law, meaning 84% of the introduced anti-LGBTQ+ bills did not pass.

California - Slate of LGBTQ+-related laws go into effect. Several new laws affecting the LGBTQ+ community went into effect in California on January 1st, including AB 223, which requires courts to seal any petition for a change of gender or sex identifier filed by a minor to protect their privacy; SB 407 which requires foster care officials to ensure LGBTQ+ children in the system are placed with supportive families; SB 760, which requires that all K-12 public schools in California provide at least one easily accessible all-gender restroom for students; and several more.

Ohio - State Senate overrides Gov. DeWine's veto of HB68. The bill, which bans medically necessary care for trans and non-binary youth as well as banning trans athletes from competing in school sports, will become law 90 days from the override vote, which took place on January 24th.

Utah - State House passes bathroom ban bill. HB257 passed the house on January 19th by a vote of 52-17. The bill would prohibit trans people from using gender-designated spaces - like bathrooms and locker rooms - that match their gender identity in government buildings.

GLOBAL MATTERS

Estonia - Same-sex marriage legalized. Same-sex marriages can be performed in the country as of New Year's Day. Estonia is the first former Soviet Republic to legalize same-sex marriage.

Israel - Supreme Court rules same-sex couples can adopt children. The unanimous ruling released on December 28th struck down the adoption law which stated that only "a man and his wife together" could adopt children.

MEDIA MATTERS

Cate Blanchett establishes fund to uplift films by women, trans, and non-binary people. Blanchett partnered with the University of Southern California to launch the Proof of Concept Accelerator Program.

Will Ferrell creates a documentary about his relationship with his best friend who came out as trans. "Will & Harper" will explore their friendship, Harper's coming out, and her transition over the course of a road trip Ferrell and Harper take together.

Study shows fears of discrimination deters LGBT Americans from fostering. A study by Gallup and Kidsave showed that 37% of LGBT adults have seriously considered fostering a child, and 32% have seriously considered adoption, compared with 23% and 15% of non-LGBT adults, respectively. Despite the greater interest in fostering and adoption among LGBT adults, more than a third of this group said that discrimination was a major barrier to getting involved in foster care.

LGBTQ+ book sales reach new records. LGBTQ+ fiction book sales increased 7% this year, which represent a 200% increase from 2019. Total fiction sales, by contrast, decreased by 3% this year.

This is a small sample of articles from Policy Matters, a weekly email publication by PFLAG National.

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to receive the full newsletter:
pflagil.org/membership-and-donation/**

NEW CHAPTER

PFLAG

GENEVA/TRI-CITIES

Hello PCNI!

PFLAG Geneva/Tri-Cities just became an official chapter on January 10th.

We are located in the northwestern suburbs of Chicago in Kane County. We are thrilled to be able to serve our community through PFLAG's pillars of Support, Education & Advocacy.

Our meetings will be held on the **second Monday of each month from 6:30-8pm in Geneva**. (Official Meeting starting date TBA)

**Save the Date: Monday, March 11th 6:30-8pm
PFLAG Geneva/Tri-Cities Meet & Greet**

Email the chapter at pflaggenetrocities@gmail.com for the location and chapter announcements.



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OTTAWA

**by Rev. Jennifer Amy-Dressler
(she/her)**

The Ottawa chapter wrapped up 2023 with an earlier-than-usual meeting. Our fourth Sunday meeting date would have been Christmas Eve, so we moved our gathering to the week before. With December being a busy month for many, we did not plan a program. We weren't even sure how many folks to expect. But it was important to have a safe and supportive place to get together before the holidays, knowing that family holiday expectations and gatherings can be awkward and often painful for LGBTQ+ folks and their allies. For those nervous about get-togethers, or showing up in Christmas Eve services with a family member who is newly "out," it was reassuring to hear others who had passed that stage long ago and to know these folks had their backs. Even in -- especially in -- church settings. Sometimes it's good just to be together, tell stories, and know you are part of a safe community.

The turn of the year also brought a couple joyful celebrations. Months ago, Carolyn Walshkog of the Transformative Justice Law Project gave a presentation on securing a legal name change in the state of Illinois, and how it relates to securing new state identification cards or drivers licenses, Social Security, etc. One of the trans adults who attended, and a youth whose parents attended, reached out to Carolyn and TJLP. Both these individuals received their legal name changes in just the last few weeks. We are thrilled that our program helped them make the connection they needed, and so excited for them both!

Sometimes we plant seeds in small ways. Over time, they can bear sweet justice and lifegiving fruit.

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HOMER GLEN / LOCKPORT

by **Michelle Eckmayer (she/her)**

Happy New Year! PFLAG Homer Glen Lockport closed out 2023 with some fun events with our focus continuing to build relationships with our community.

In the last quarter of 2023, we were invited to participate in 2 area Trunk or Treats Our mascot unicorn continues to be a favorite with the younger folks!



In October we had a guest speaker, Kaiden Montana aka Blue. Blue is the founder of the Trans Pride Foundation, which offers a comprehensive training package for professional organizations, non-profits, government, and

other local agencies on becoming more trans-inclusive in their policies and training employees. He is an amazing advocate for the trans community & we were grateful for his open sharing of his experiences in being an advocate.



Our PFLAG snowperson joined the community by being part of the Homer Holidays again this year.



In November we held our Holiday Celebration. We enjoyed spending time together, eating, playing games, and having fun as a PFLAG family!



Lastly, at our December meeting, which was Dec 26th, we made Vision Boards to help us focus on what we (PFLAG & individual) want to make happen in 2024!!!!

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TINLEY PARK

by **Kathy King-Watters (she/her/ella)**

PFLAG Tinley Park had a quiet January but we are winding up for a fantastic 2024. At our January meeting, we held a "tea party" for those who braved the polar vortex. We drank tea and hot chocolate and ate cookies while sharing, and some did coloring as well. January is a good time to start a self-care habit for the new year and it brightened up a blah and bitter day. We also made a care package with some Valentines and goodies for a trans member in the Army who at his first duty post. We've known him since he was in 8th grade and want him to feel the love across the miles!

We've also started a Rainbow Reference page, building off what our friends in the Kankakee LGBTQ Network started. It has affirming and LGBTQ+ owned businesses, churches, therapists, doctors, and gender care programs in the south suburban/Kankakee/Chicago area. We will continue to update it as it grows. It's exciting to see all the "rainbow friendly" places listed!

Last we will be tabling with other PFLAGers at the Illinois GSA Summit in Chicago on January, 27th. If you know us, you know we love getting out into the community, so we will have buttons, Safe Space cards, scholarship info, and tons of hugs and support for all those attending. It will be a great way to wind up January.

PFLAG HINSDALE

by **Marcia Prichason (she/her)**

PFLAG Hinsdale welcomed Carolyn Wahlskog, LCSW, Director of Operations and Programming with Youth Outlook, to our January meeting. Carolyn gave a very thorough and informative slide-show presentation of the services Youth Outlook offers. Youth Outlook is the first and longest-running social service agency in Illinois solely dedicated to supporting LGBTQ+ youth. The agency serves seven counties in northern Illinois, offering drop-in centers for youth, caregiver and parent support, plus community education and professional development. While continuing to expand their services, Youth Outlook has not lost sight of its mission to provide dedicated programming related to physical and mental health, identity and self-esteem, safer sex, and healthy relationships that encourage positive self-confidence. With plenty of resources and activities for everyone, it is no surprise that their new Rainbow Sprouts Program, which serves youth ages 5-11, has really taken off. Their largest and fastest-growing group is Transcend, a supportive and affirming space for trans and non-binary youth. For information about how Youth Outlook can help you and your loved ones, visit <https://youth-outlook.org>

PFLAG Hinsdale's next meeting will be on Sunday, February 4th at 2:00 P.M. at the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale, 11 W Maple, Hinsdale, IL 60521. David Settje, a member of EQDG and an author who writes books about "Gay Speculative Fiction" under the pen name Damian Serbu, will speak about his books. All are welcome to attend.



Carolyn Wahlskog (she/they)

PFLAG DEERFIELD

by **Jodi Zavos (she/her)**

The weather was snowy and blustery for those who attended in person. Tech problems plagued those whose came on Zoom. Yet in the end we were all together and the meeting was warm, welcoming, and very informative. New friends were made. Nat Duran of Constellation Collective spoke and reminded us that the loving support of just one adult in an LGBTQ+ person's life can make all the difference. And if that support comes from a parent, it's even more powerful. That touched me. I hope it touches you too. It's the power of PFLAG so to speak.

Deerfield will be on Zoom only in February and March and will resume in person meetings in April. Please join us anytime!



by **Chris Kocol (she/her)**

Now that the Holiday Rush is behind us, PFLAG McHenry is moving forward, despite all the cold! We will be staffing a table later in January at **The People In Need Forum**, at McHenry County College. The Forum is open free to the general public, & it is where one can learn about the many resources and support available in our area. We'll have more information next month, as the Forum is scheduled after this month's Open Door press deadline.

We were quite happy that we had our January meeting via Zoom because it was a horrible day, weather wise, to be out on the roads. Adding to our delight was our guest speaker, **Jordan Johnson**, President of PFLAG Ottawa. Our Board read about Jordan's presentation entitled "What is Gender Affirming Care?", they shared with the Ottawa Chapter in the October 2023 issue of Open Door, and we invited them to share it with our Chapter. Searching through reputable sources, Jordan put together a very informative presentation that succinctly defined gender affirming care as: "any combination of social, legal, or medical measures that help people feel

happy, healthy & safe in their gender." Jordan then broke down the areas of social, legal, & medical gender affirming care, including interventions available for minors, breaking it down by age groups. Included were the recommendations & support for gender affirming care from the American Academy of Pediatrics (reaffirmed in August 2023), the American Association of Clinical Endocrinology (as of March 2022), and the American Medical Association (June 2023). And what about those who question how many people regret transitioning? Jordan presented data from reputable U.S. studies that indicate that there is only up to a 1% regret rate from adults who have undergone any gender affirming surgery. More people regret having knee replacement surgery, spinal surgery, ANY surgery, & 52% (more than half) regret taking out student loans! And that small 1% regret rate is often due to a lack of social support or poor surgical outcomes, not "changing one's mind". Jordan emphasized: "There is no medical treatment with a 0% regret rate. There isn't a decision you could make that has a 0% regret rate. That doesn't mean we should ban people from pursuing the treatments that make sense for them. What it means is that we should support the small amount of people who do."

We were delighted to have Jordan join us and lead us in discussions of exactly "What is Gender Affirming Care?" and we wholeheartedly recommend other Chapters consider inviting Jordan to speak to their groups.

Until next month: Stay warm. Stay Safe. And Lead with Love!

Gender Affirming Care: "any combination of social, legal, or medical measures that help people feel happy, healthy and safe in their gender."

PFLAG

DUPAGE

by **Kelly Hemmer (she/her)**

PFLAG DuPage enjoyed our annual holiday party in December. We are grateful to be able to celebrate the holidays in a safe space surrounded by our loving PFLAG friends and allies. Guests brought desserts and appetizers to munch on, and Kelly led us in an amusing trivia Bingo.

For January, our presenter was Leslie Clark. She is a co-founder of A New Way, an affirming and inclusive unique church experience. They meet every Friday evening and have different areas of discussion each week. While A New Way is a faith-based group, but they do not try to "convert" people and welcome everyone no matter what their beliefs are.

Leslie is also an ambassador for The Reformation Project, whose mission is to further the inclusion of LGBTQ people in the Church while honoring scripture. She talked about many examples of how scripture affirms LGBTQ+ people. For those who wish to learn more, Leslie has several books she recommends:

- [*God and the Gay Christian* by Matthew Vines](#) (good for people who attend church)
- [*UnClobber* by Colby Martin](#) (for those who have left the church)
- [*The Shift* by Colby Martin](#) (for those who have left the church)
- [*Changing Our Minds* by David Gushee](#)
- [*Torn* by Justin Lee](#)
- [*The Bible and Sexuality* by Karen Keen](#)
- [*Trans-Gender* by Justin Tanis](#)
- [*TransForming* by Austin Hartke](#)
- [*Queer Virtue* by Reverend Elizabeth Edman](#)

A few recommendations came up during the sharing circle:

- **How to Know A Person** a book about helping people that struggle with depression.
- **Virgin Cruise Lines** - recommended as the most LGBTQ+ friendly cruise line. Has Drag Queen performers, crew members openly wearing pride pins and being open about being part of the LGBTQ+ community.

PFLAG

PTI CHICAGO

by **Francey Oscherwitz (she/her)**

Greetings and Happy New Year from PTI Chicago!

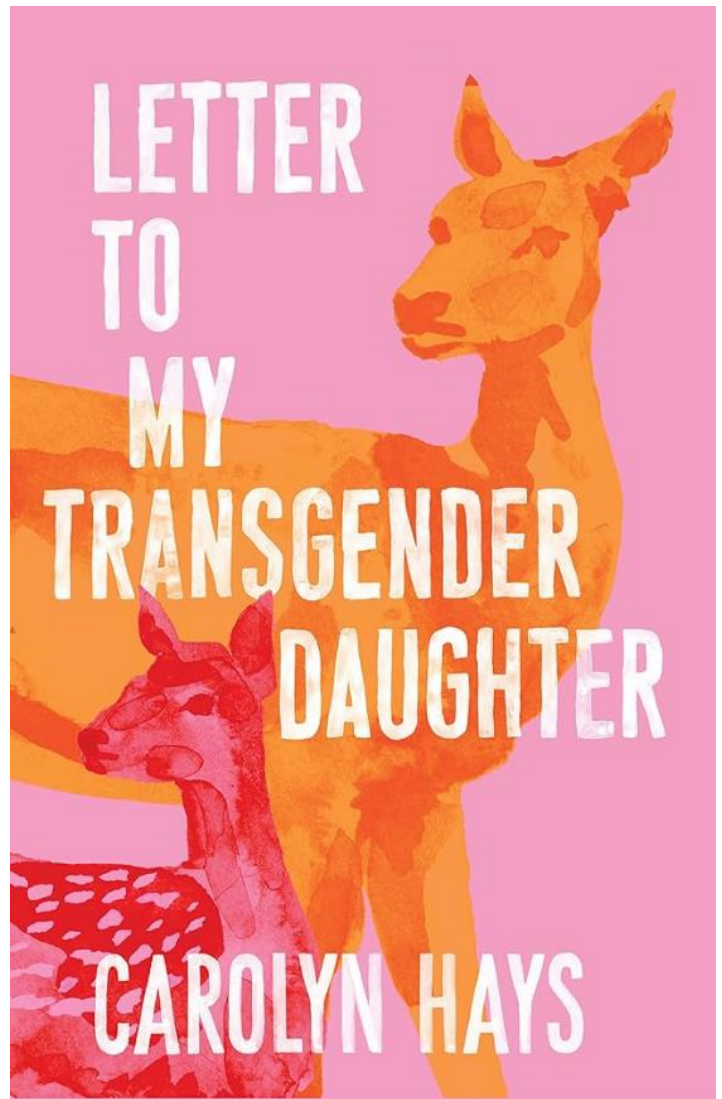
We begin 2024 by expressing our Big Gratitude:

- To PFLAG for “leading with love” in its public advocacy on behalf of all queer people and their families, and for ingeniously bringing allies together in community pods in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.
- To our tireless PCNI President, Andrew Zanevsky, whose humane messaging and awesome editorial, curatorial, and design chops WOW us with each new issue of Open Doors!
- To PTI Chicago—the first and best PFLAG group to dedicate itself exclusively to parents and caregivers of transgender, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming individuals. Because of its unique charter as a confidential group (“what’s said in this room stays in this room”); its twin missions of education and support; its savvy longtime leaders and warm inclusive vibe, this group will continue to be a lifeline for parents, grandparents, and caregivers. (More than one joined at the urging of their child.)

- To our outgoing president, Bill Guilfoile, who succeeded his wife Betty Guilfoile just in time to steer us rock-steadily through the upheaval of a global pandemic—and make it look easy! (He is being replaced by 4 full-sized humans)
- To our dedicated PTI Chicago membership who “showed up” at the online polls and unanimously voted in our new 6-member board.
- To our new board members, Valerie Harper and David Antos, for joining up; and to Molly Malone, Christine Peters, Terry Brugger, and me for joining as re-recruits.
- To co-president Terry Brugger who not only made us a new, more accessible online “platform” (and taught us each how to use it) but also conducted our election.
- To the authors, filmmakers, bloggers, TikTokers, YouTubers, and other media persons who affirm trans identities and apply their creative talents to inspiring and educating us, often in amusing ways.
- Above all, to our beautiful, vulnerable, trail-blazing, gender-expansive children (big, little, in-between), who amplify questions that their parents might have asked—but didn’t know we could. Love for them is our rocket fuel.

We’re excited to announce our next Book Club selection—[**A Girlhood: Letter to My Transgender Daughter**](#), by Carolyn Hays—which we’ll discuss during the first hour of our March 14th meeting. For a list of our past Book Club readings and recommendations, contact Francey (she/her) at [**Franceyo101@gmail.com**](mailto:Franceyo101@gmail.com).

PTI Chicago currently meets via Zoom on the 2d Thursday of every month from 7 to 9pm. Parents, guardians, or family members of transgender, nonbinary, or gender-diverse individuals who would like to join us for the first time should e-mail PTI Chicago co-president Francey Oscherwitz (she/her) at [**Franceyo101@gmail.com**](mailto:Franceyo101@gmail.com). Participants will receive a welcome email and be sent the meeting link and password a few days before the meeting.



***Editor:** Open Doors published a review of this wonderful book in the [**July 2023**](#) issue on page 32 and an interview with the author in the [**September 2023**](#) issue on pages 24-25. Enjoy reading!*

Email [**opendoors@pflagillinois.org**](mailto:opendoors@pflagillinois.org) to publish your artworks, photography, essays, poetry, movie and book reviews in **Open Doors**, send us online resources to share and ideas on topics to cover and people to interview.

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SAVE THE DATE

EQUALITY ILLINOIS

LGBTQ+ Advocacy Day

Wednesday
May 8, 2024

Illinois State Capitol
Springfield, Illinois



[CLICK HERE TO SAVE THE DATE](#)



KEEPING PEOPLE WARM

by **Marcia Prichason (she/her)**

Helping to keep people warm this winter, Chicago Police Department LGBTQ+ Liaison and Patrice Washington, Homeless Outreach Liaison receive socks and hats from PFLAG Hinsdale.



Black History Month

by **Kathy King Watters (she/her/ella)**

In honor of Black History Month, PFLAG proudly salutes African American LGBTQ+ Trailblazers.



Bayard Rustin

Key advisor to Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.



Colman Domingo

Art Imitating Life: Colman Domingo, an openly gay actor, recently received his first Oscar nomination for *Rustin*, Best Actor for a Leading Role Category.



Barbara Jordan

First African American woman elected to Congress from Texas



Marsha P. Johnson

Central figure of the 1969 Stonewall Uprising



Ron Oden

First openly gay African American man elected mayor of an American city



Willi Ninja

“Grandfather” of the Vogue dance movement



Andrea Jenkins

First openly transgender African American woman elected to public office in the U.S



Keith St. John

First openly gay African American person elected to public office in the U.S.



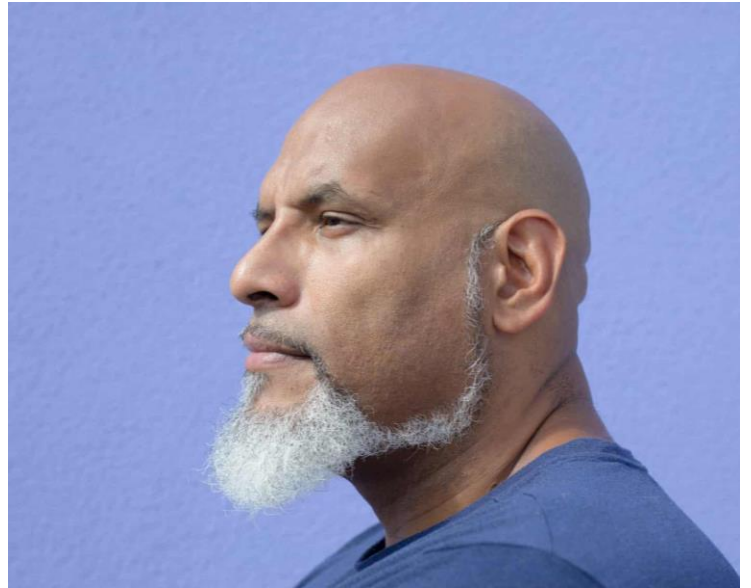
Lori Lightfoot

Chicago's first African American female and openly gay mayor



Wanda Sykes

First African American lesbian to be the featured entertainer for the White House Correspondents Association



John Amaechi

First former NBA player to come out as gay



Frank Ocean

One of the first hip hop artists to admit same gender attraction



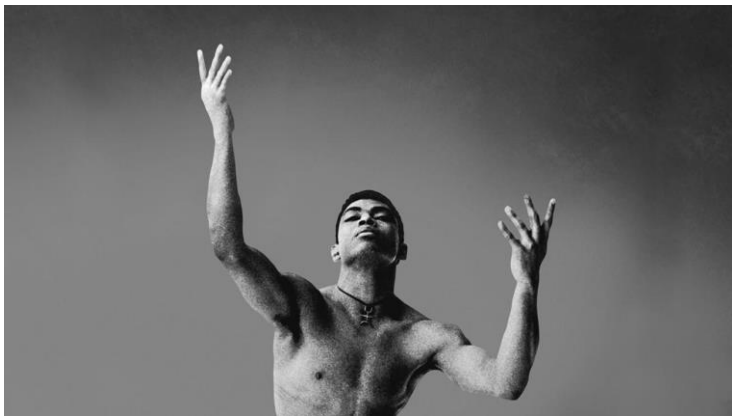
Deborah Batts

First openly gay federal judge in the U.S.



Simone Bell

First African American lesbian to serve in any state legislature in the U.S.



Alvin Ailey

Founder of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater



Janet Wight

Jewelry Designer, Phoenix, Arizona

Interview by Ann McAuliffe (she/her)

ARTIST STATEMENT

I find myself approaching my 20th year anniversary as a jeweler... My how time flies!! I never guessed when I set up my booth for my first art festival in Tempe, Arizona 20 years ago that I would make it to this point. I was SO nervous that I could not open the front of my booth at that first show... I finally did, twenty minutes late, scared that I wouldn't sell a thing!! To my astonishment, I sold over a hundred of my first product...My "Good Fortunes" necklaces, and the rest is history I suppose...

My line has increased to over 150 designs, and I am lucky enough to sell nationwide, even WORLDWIDE! I think I have the best job ever, as I get to do something every day that I truly enjoy...

Thank you to all my wonderful clients who make it possible for me to keep doing what I do...

Your support is SO appreciated.

Sincerely,

Janet



Janet Wight's Contact Info:

Email: janet@jewelryforthesoul.com

Website: www.jewelryforthesoul.com

Facebook: [jewelry for the soul](https://www.facebook.com/jewelryforthesoul)

Instagram: [@jewelry_for_the_soul](https://www.instagram.com/jewelry_for_the_soul)

INTERVIEW

Open Doors: Welcome to Open Doors. How did you discover your passion for jewelry design and creation? When did you decide to be an artist? What is your design background, education, and/or training?

Janet Wight: I put myself through college working in photo labs, so photography was my first artistic endeavor. I have a degree in Communications, and worked as an operations manager for a computer graphics company back in my corporate days. At the age of thirty, I left Corporate America to open a restaurant. Since then, I have owned a car wash and patio furniture business, strange combo I know! In 2000 when I was in transition after the furniture business, I had the idea for my jewelry business.

It started from an idea I had to make a necklace as a gift for my girlfriend that would look like a crumpled paper fortune out of a fortune cookie, but in silver. The pendant was a silver "fortune" and the necklace came packaged inside an ACTUAL fortune cookie. "Good Fortunes" were my FIRST product, and I launched my line with them in 2002 at the Tempe Art Festival. I sold enough of them at my first show to buy the rest of the equipment I needed to complete my jewelry studio.

OD: Your company is called "Jewelry for the Soul". Your tag line reads "Cool...Funky...Positive". So many of your works embody "Affirmations". Your jewelry expresses positive, uplifting and inspiring messages. Can you tell us



why these positive themes are so central to your work?
Where do you draw inspiration from?

JW: I have always been a positive person by nature. I am a bit of a “Pollyanna” and get teased for it, but I think it beats the alternative! As far as my work, I have always thought it is important to put a positive vibe into my art, especially if someone is going to be wearing it! My wife inspires me every day! She is the real talent in the family!

OD: Many of your designs incorporate mixed materials which are metals – sterling silver, copper – and occasionally gemstones. And, all your pieces are handmade. How do you create / sculpt your pieces? How much time does it take to convert raw material into a finished piece?

JW: I primarily use sterling silver to fabricate my pieces. I hand cut, hand stamp, hand form each piece using silver soldering for all connections. The time to make each piece varies depending on complexity of the design... luckily, I have gotten faster with the years of practice :)

OD: What is it like inside your studio? What is your favorite part of the process?

JW: I am lucky to have a studio space in our home ...It is not huge, but it has nice energy. LOTS of pictures of my family and my dogs, past and present. My favorite part about my work is how detailed and precise it is, it is kind of meditative for me...



OD: It looks like you spend a fair amount of time traveling to Art Shows to showcase your work. Where are your favorite places to go? Are there certain shows you always attend? What is on your bucket list?

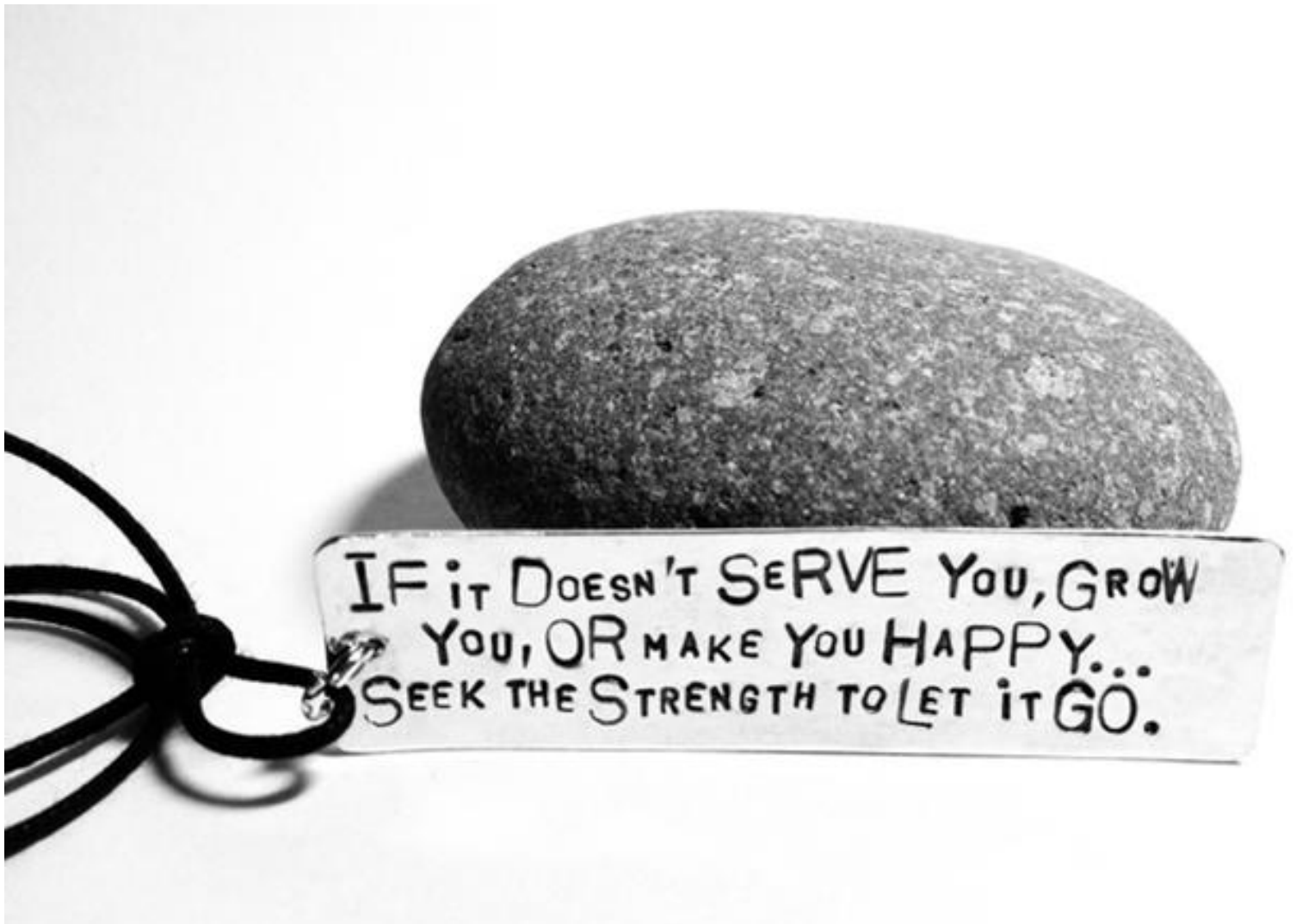
JW: I love Oregon because it is beautiful and the people are SO nice, but California is where I grew up, so I take any opportunity to travel there for work so I can go to the beach!! The Tempe Art Festival is my favorite show :) I don't have a bucket list per se regarding my work. I hope I am lucky enough to eat my way thru Italy and France someday, and that I get to have several more Dogs before I leave this earth!

OD: Art may deliver a political statement, entertainment, education; it may shock, inspire, anger, fill with love or cause any other emotion. What effect do you want your artworks to have in the world?

JW: I want my work to be someone's everyday favorite. The kind of jewelry that if you forget to put it on you feel, all day, like you are missing something. I just keep trying to put out a positive product and spread as much love as possible during a VERY difficult time in the world.

My work is not the most complicated, but it is HEARTFELT. I hope it is the kind of jewelry you would give your lover, your best friend or your Mom. I hope I have made a lot of people smile along the way.

OD: Does Phoenix provide a good environment for a creative LGBTQ+ person? Are new professional opportunities opening up for LGBTQ+ artists? What can allies do to support creative LGBTQ+ people? Any advice for young people starting out in a creative field?



JW: I love that even in a Red State, Phoenix is VERY diverse and feels inclusive to LGBTQ+ people. LOTS of rainbow flags in my neighborhood flying proudly!!

As far as advice...The best advice a mentor gave me in my twenties was to “play through the fear!” Other people cannot SEE your fear, so just fake it till you make it!! If you can ACT confident, eventually you ARE confident!! As I age, the best thing I have learned is that it is OK to make mistakes, take chances, and don’t be hard on yourself if you screw up, just move on and try something else! You never know, your next idea might be the one that works out the best!!

OD: How do you stay positive and nurture your soul in challenging times?

JW: These days I really just try to focus on being GRATEFUL. I have a wonderful and supportive wife and family, a golden retriever named Lulu who is pure JOY, and a 1965 VW Karmann Ghia to take for a spin if I am feeling down. If all else fails, I cook! Feeding people always seems like a productive use of my time :) ♡



The Elmhurst Pride Collective, Art & Gratitude

by **Stephanie Wargin & Kelli Mitchell**

The [Elmhurst Pride Collective](#) (EPC) was formed in 2019 by a group of residents, business owners, and community leaders. Our mission is to foster and promote a safe and inclusive environment for all, including LGBTQ+ families, friends, and allies, and people of all races, ethnicities, and religions, by creating connections, sharing resources, and celebrating our diverse community.

The EPC brings together a wide array of local businesses, organizations, and neighbors who share our goals and are committed to making Elmhurst, Illinois, a welcoming place to live, learn, and grow. We strive to celebrate, recognize, and empower all the diverse members of our community.

The first event of its kind hosted by the EPC, we are overjoyed to offer a weekend with visiting artist [Rae Senarighi/Transpainter](#) this spring!

Based in Madison, Wisconsin, Rae's gorgeous work and his story captured our attention, and we are able to offer this community event, entitled *Art & Gratitude*, thanks to a generous donation from the JCS Arts, Health and Education Fund of [DuPage Foundation](#). Additionally, the EPC is grateful to be collaborating with the [Elmhurst Art Museum](#) and [Michael SyMBER Studios](#) to offer an amazing weekend of events.

Rae Senarighi, aka Transpainter, is your average non-binary cancer survivor inspiring self-compassion, activism and gender resilience via unapologetic portraiture of vibrant transgender and non-binary power and spreading joyful presentations worldwide. His art has been internationally featured in a wide range of press, on Netflix, and thousands of You Are Loved billboards across the U.S. and Canada.

The **Art & Gratitude weekend** is happening in Elmhurst, Illinois **March 8 – 10, 2024**. This is a free event, donations are welcome. The weekend's offerings include:

Self-Love Portrait Workshop

Friday, March 8

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Michael SyMBER Studios

This workshop, geared toward high school, college and adult amateur and professional artists, will be led by visiting artist Rae Senarighi and centers on radical self-love, compassionate meditation and creative play.

[Register here](#)

Radical Self-Love

Sunday, March 10

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Elmhurst Art Museum

This exciting keynote discussion by visiting artist Rae Senarighi will address trans rights, gratitude and daily art practices, with the aim of inspiring other artists and creators of all ages and abilities to be compassionate souls—to benefit both themselves and the world. Hear Rae's story—as an artist, trans activist and cancer survivor—and be inspired to integrate creativity and self-love into your own life. This event is great for all ages.

[Register here](#)

Creative Affirmation Workshop

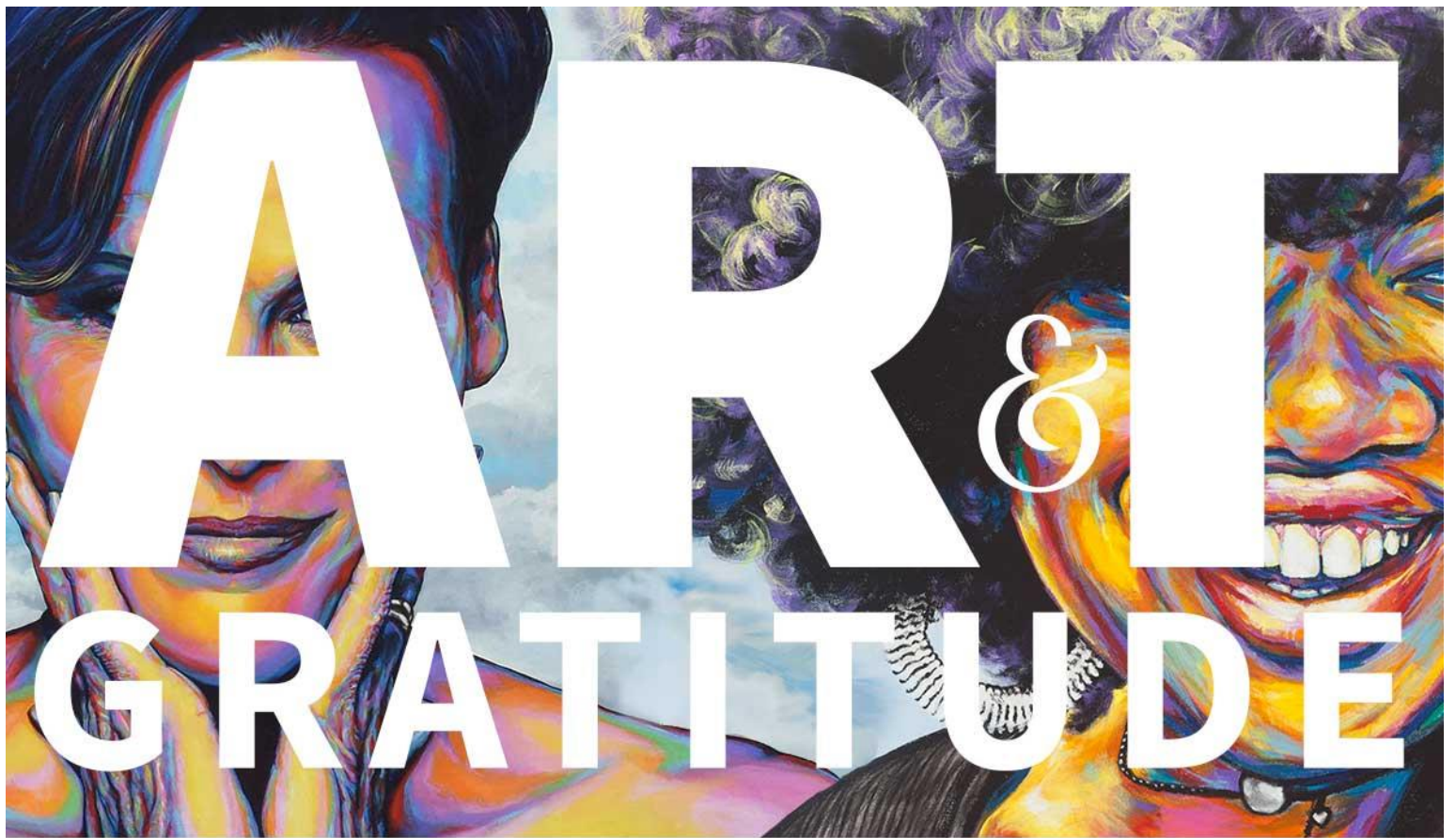
Sunday, March 10

1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Elmhurst Art Museum

This workshop will focus on helping participants turn a hardship or problem into an affirmation. Artist Rae Senarighi will demo creating a custom type-based poster. Participants will then create their own unique affirmation poster using a variety of provided materials. Open to artists and non-artists ages 8+.

[Register here](#)



A WEEKEND WITH VISITING ARTIST
RAE SENARIGHI / TRANSPainter



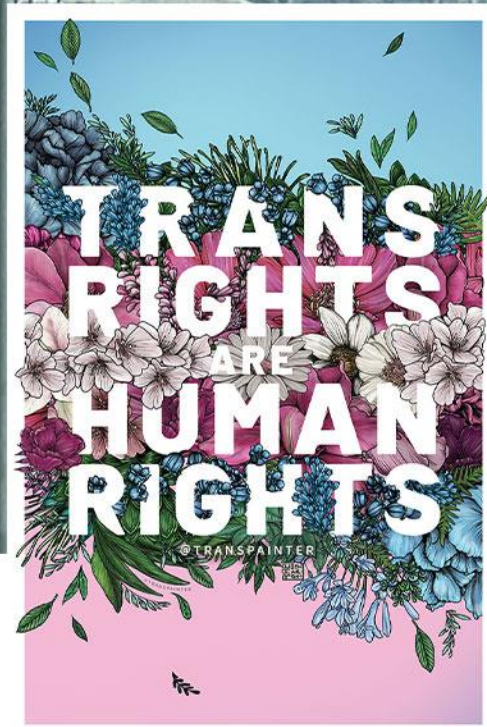
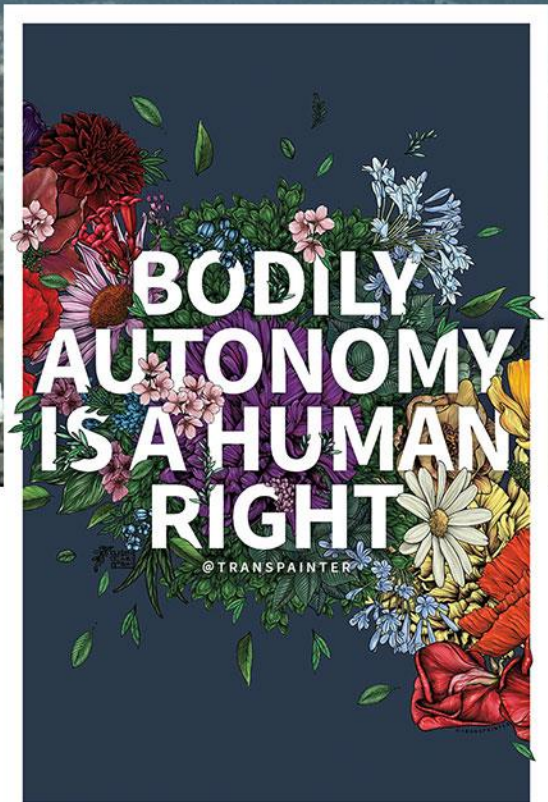
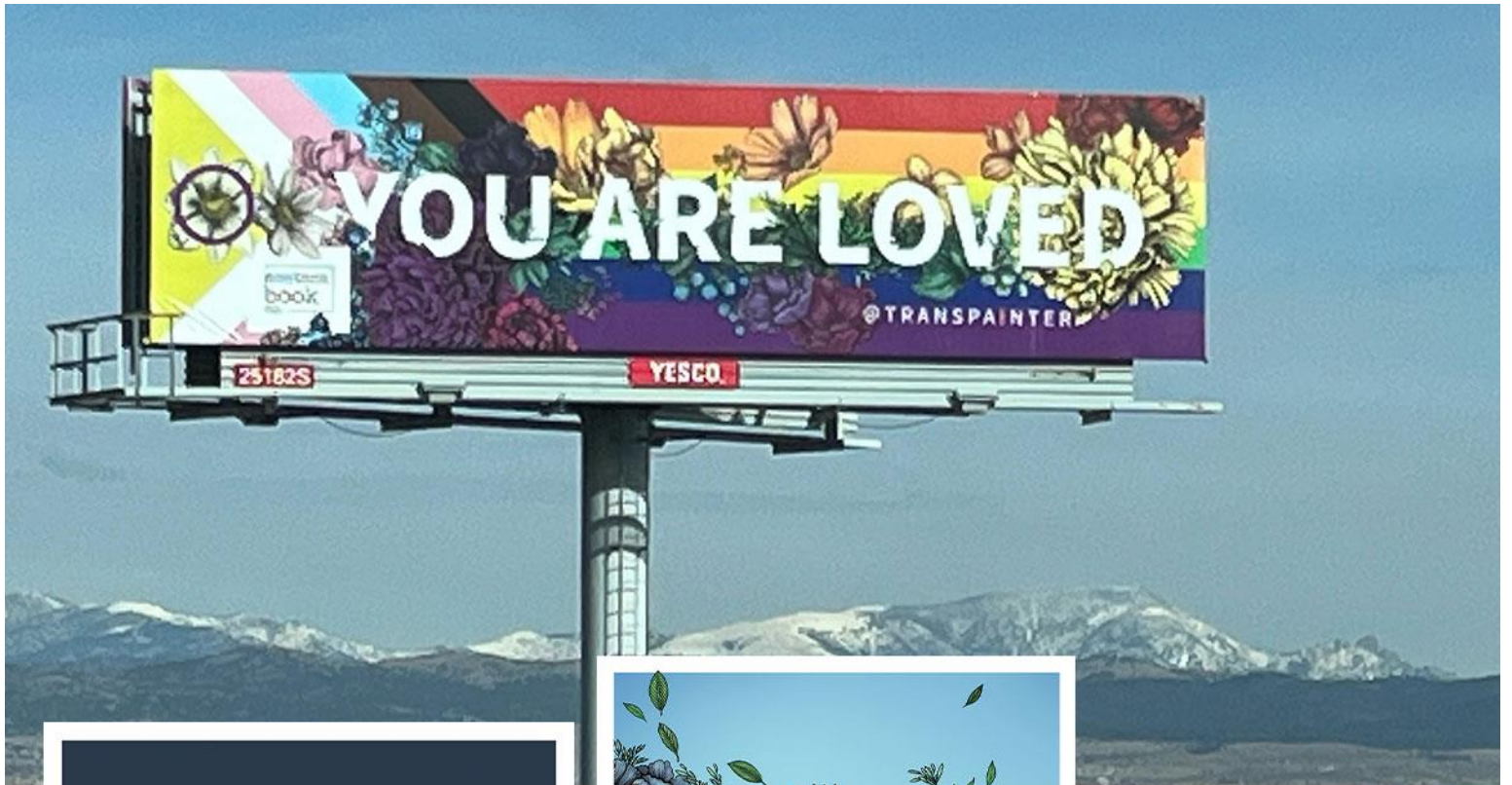
MARCH
8TH - 10TH
2024

SPONSORED BY:



Elmhurst
Pride
Collective

Editor: Open Doors published an interview with Rae Senarighi in the [December 2020](#) issue, including many of his artworks.



REGISTER
HERE



ElmhurstPrideCollective.com/events

Get to know Constellation Collective - A Conversation with Nat Duran

Interview by Ann McAuliffe (she/her)



Constellation Collective

“As evidenced by our tagline, “you’re a star, but you don’t have to shine alone,” we work to help others connect more deeply to themselves, each other, and the future they hope to build both personally and professionally.”



INTERVIEW

Open Doors: Welcome to Open Doors, Nat! You are embarking on a new initiative. You are a co-founder of Constellation Collective. Can you tell us about your new company?

Nat Duran: Absolutely, and thank you so much for the opportunity to be here - all of us at Constellation Collective are huge fans and admirers of the fantastic folks and work of PFLAG! Our organizational mission is to use our collective skills as therapists, facilitators, and educators to support, one relationship at a time, the creation of a world that is able to shine with the collective brilliance of all.

We primarily do this work through: individual, group, and family therapy; clinical consultation and supervision for therapists; and professional learning opportunities via workshops, learning cohorts, and retreats. We believe deeply in the power of community and patterns and we ground our work in the magic of connection. As evidenced by our tagline, **“you’re a star, but you don’t have to shine alone,”** we work to help others connect more deeply to themselves, each other, and the future they hope to build both personally and professionally.

OD: Who is on your team?

ND: I’m proud to report that our team of clinicians is currently growing, but the founding members are an interdisciplinary team of therapists, educators, and

facilitators who hold various identities in regards to gender, sexuality, and ability. Collectively, we have 60 years' worth of experience working with youth and families in a variety of settings (early childhood; service learning; peer education; peer leadership; all stages of adolescence and young adulthood; youth organizing and advocacy) and sectors (school; residential; private practice; community mental health; and non-profit). We are grateful that our team is largely made up of mental health professionals as it ensures all our work is rooted in holding compassion for people who are at various points in their learning journeys, providing tangible support for others in helping professions, and responding to all in an evidence-backed, trauma-informed way.

OD: Who do you serve?

ND: In regards to our Professional Learning work, we use the connected image to demonstrate that we center youth and families, whose relationship constellations are often made up of various groups, organizations, and communities which depend upon teams of leaders, educators, and helping professionals within them. We use this image and model to ground ourselves and explain to others how we hope to be in service to anyone whose direct or indirect work benefits youth and families, no matter how long they've been in the work.



Regarding our mental health therapeutic services, many of our specialists are known for supporting LGBTQ+ young people, but we see clients of all ages! Some folks express surprise that we see adult clients as well, but it's true! Yes, this might include parents, guardians, and other adult family members of LGBTQ+ youth, but we certainly are not limited to that focus. However, particularly for parents whose child has just come out as queer or trans, we find supporting multiple members from the same family acknowledges that coming out is

often the beginning of a learning journey for the whole family. We also hold expertise in the intersection of LGBTQ+ identities with neurodivergence and of mental health with chronic health conditions.

OD: What services do you offer?

ND: For me, personally, the most fun and exciting projects have all included community building or deepening - whether for social or learning means. I just love the experience of being in community with like-minded people with a shared goal! In the year and a half that we've been building our business, I've had opportunities to work with largely Queer and Trans professional teams using lessons from their own lived experiences to deepen their practices, explore alignment between their personal and professional values, and strengthen their own respective working relationships with one another. I know from experience that identity-based work weighs more heavily on those who share aspects of identity with those they serve or help - helping these groups grow closer across programs or sites is a way to increase sustainability in the work and prevent burnout. Looking forward, I'm most excited at taking this work to the next level in building out our offerings of immersive learning experiences. For many years I was involved in the Action Camp project and that work remains one of the highlights of my career - I would absolutely love to take the skills developed through that project and adapt them for project or program teams who could benefit from such a learning space.

In regards to our other Professional Learning work, the sky really is the limit. The bulk of our workshop series requests thus far have largely centered on inclusion work of some sort - whether that's of LGBTQ+ youth, trans individuals more specifically, accessibility practices for neurodivergent community members, or providing an introduction to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work more broadly.

Our clinicians offer individual, group, and family therapy sessions as well as clinical consultation and supervision for therapists. There is sometimes a misperception that a clinician needs to share identities with a client in order to best serve them, particularly when LGBTQ+ folks are newer in their identity discoveries. However, for folks

who are already connected to and have a strong working relationship with a therapist, we would much rather that clinical relationship be maintained and prioritized and so we offer supports and processing space that could be helpful for mental health professionals newer to that learning journey.

OD: How can we find you?

ND: The easiest and most direct way to find us would be via our website -

www.constellationcollectivechicago.com. There folks could learn more about our services and team, sign up for our Quarterly Newsletter, or check out [The Third Space](#) - a podcast for youth workers by youth workers about the highs and lows of working with young people outside of school and home. Technically we're also on [Facebook](#), but we've not done a great job of building out our social media presence just yet. 🙄

People looking to reach out will find a contact form on our website, or they can reach out directly to me at nat@constellationcollectivechicago.com or **708-586-9339** (text or call).

CENTER ON 3656 N. HALSTED

Center on Halsted and Youth Services' Pride Youth Program present

Trans Youth & Family Summit 2024

Saturday, March 16th
NEW LOCATION
9AM-2PM

Registration opens: January 17, 2024

An opportunity for trans and gender expansive youth and their families to come together to learn, connect to resources, and build community. Includes workshops and activities for both youth and adults. Lunch included! For more information contact youth@centeronhalsted.org

CENTER ON 3656 N. HALSTED Youth Services

RSVP at centeronhalsted.org/tyfsummit2024

3656 N. HALSTED ST • CHICAGO, IL



The Third Space - a podcast for youth workers by youth workers about the highs and lows of working with young people outside of school and home.

JANUARY 11TH 10AM - 12PM VIRTUAL

TRUSTING TRANS PEOPLE:

A NEW MODEL FOR WRITING LETTERS OF SUPPORT

As access to gender affirming surgeries has increased, demand for letters of support for surgeries from mental health professionals has expanded. This training will prepare mental health professional to support individuals seeking letters, while utilizing a client centered approach that trusts trans individuals to know their own needs. While letters must be written by mental health professionals with a clinical license, individuals at all stages of training and licensure are welcome to attend. Participants will be expected to have a basic knowledge of trans terminology as this will not be a trans 101 training.

CENTER ON 3656 N. HALSTED

CENTERONHALSTED.ORG/TRUSTINGTRANS.HTML

How PrEP4Love paved the way for PrEP4Teens

by Ann McAuliffe informed by

Dr. Kathryn Macapagal, Dr. Chris Balthazar, Jim Pickett

Hello PFLAG Family! This article encompasses a series of Public Health initiatives designed to prevent HIV transmission. Consider this your educational tutorial on HIV, the PrEP program and how several wildly successful, innovative social media & marketing campaigns are changing the landscape of HIV treatment. It's a classic case of Support, Education and Advocacy - changing the outcome for those living with and affected by HIV. Sound familiar?

What Is HIV PrEP and How Does It Work?

- PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is a way to prevent an HIV-negative person from getting HIV due to sexual exposure. You can get a prescription for an anti-retroviral pill or injection (shot) to prevent HIV. When PrEP is taken consistently and correctly, it is up to 99% effective at protecting you from getting HIV.
- PrEP is available to sexually active people from teens to adults, including people of all genders and sexual identities. As long as you are at least 77 lbs, you can get a prescription for PrEP to prevent HIV. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that every sexually active person be informed about PrEP.
- PrEP is not for someone already living with HIV.
- PrEP is not just a prescription – it is a program that includes a pill or a shot plus regular testing for HIV and STIs, ongoing medical monitoring, counseling, and other supports for your health and wellness.

Eight years ago, PrEP4Love, the “mother” of PrEP4Teens, Launched in Chicago

Study shows PrEP4Love campaign reaches millions of individuals to build awareness about vital HIV-prevention tool June 19, 2019

In 2016, the Chicago PrEP Working Group (now the Illinois PrEP Working Group) launched **PrEP4Love**, a citywide, sex-positive social marketing campaign designed to increase awareness of PrEP among sexually active adults in the Chicago area. While the campaign is no longer active, it featured intimate photos of individuals from Chicago communities that are especially vulnerable to HIV, particularly young, Black, gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men, transgender women of color and Black heterosexual women. PrEP4Love displayed ads throughout Chicago on CTA trains and buses in addition to digital campaigns and pop-up events.

According to the study, the PrEP campaign successfully built awareness and was, overall, positively received by the public. This was demonstrated by the reach of nearly 41 million ad views and

the high volume of website engagement. The website shows the first wave of marketing had a positive impact on PrEP awareness through the percentage of returning site users and the increasing amount of time users spent on the website.

Moreover, the website page listing health care providers who said they can prescribe PrEP was the most popular link clicked by users – potentially indicating that users were seeking to connect with providers to start taking PrEP. Data reviewed from the PrEPLine – a phone number that connects callers who are interested in PrEP to local resources – further supports evidence that the campaign demand has moved beyond online features to in-person calls made related to PrEP. The data indicates the campaign is reaching young, Black gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men based on how PrEPLine callers identified.

“With these astounding numbers—41 million views of the PrEP4Love campaign and nearly 25,000 users clicking on its content—we know the social marketing elements, pop-up events, ads and messaging clearly resonated. I’m grateful for the leadership of Jim Pickett and the Illinois PrEP Working Group on this project. We still have much progress to make, however, and must continue to find innovative ways to increase PrEP awareness and access in the communities most impacted by HIV,” said John Peller, AIDS Foundation Chicago (AFC) President/CEO. AFC was the organization that spearheaded the PrEP4Love campaign.

The PrEP4Love campaign produced a number of diverse images to give its message a broad appeal. Photos courtesy of Jim Pickett

PrEP4Love was focused on adults. But what about teens and their right to know about PrEP for HIV prevention?

Teenagers and young adults (13–24 years old) accounted for 20% of **new HIV diagnoses** in 2020, with 6,135 young people diagnosed with HIV. In Illinois, young people ages 13–24 represent the second-lowest percentage of **PrEP users** among all age groups. This campaign intends to inform teens about PrEP, educate them about local clinics offering HIV prevention and treatment services, and play a role in reducing the number of young people impacted by HIV.

“I believe deeply that young people deserve information about and access to sexual health services that have the potential to improve their wellbeing,” said Pickett, the community lead on a research-to-implementation, arts-focused, social marketing and community mobilization project called PrEP4Teens. “And our team is committed to following the lead of teens, who know best how to reach their peers.”



In the spring of 2018, just before PrEP was approved for adolescents by the FDA, Dr. Kathryn Macapagal of Northwestern University’s Institute of Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Wellbeing learned through her own [research](#) there were very few LGBTQ+ teens who were aware of PrEP. This motivated her to develop two research projects focused on PrEP for this population, including the [study](#) that kicked off the PrEP4Teens work in 2020. This initial project was funded by an “Ending the HIV Epidemic” grant to the Third Coast CFAR. On this project, Macapagal partnered with Pickett, an internationally-recognized HIV prevention advocate who led Chicago’s PrEP4Love campaign for adults as mentioned earlier. PrEP4Love was the initial inspiration for PrEP4Teens, and PrEP4Love materials were shared with teens in focus groups to assess their opinions. While teens appreciated the PrEP4Love campaign aesthetics and style, such as the black and white photography, they were very clear that the campaign was for adults and not directed to them, or meaningful to them as youth. Many also felt it came across a little too “slick.”

After researching what teens and adults wanted out of an adolescent-centered PrEP campaign, Macapagal and Pickett’s team recruited LGBTQ+ teens in the Chicago area to develop a campaign proposal based on these findings. During a 2021 summer “Creative Think Tank”, led by strategist Elijah McKinnon of [People Who Care](#), young people ages 15 – 18 created mock-ups of digital posters, murals, stickers, and TikTok challenges that would appeal to their peers. The team held another summer Think Tank in 2022, where teens expanded upon campaign ideas and answered creative and implementation questions.

PrEP4Teens Launch Party: PrEP4Teens Brings HIV Prevention Artwork and Engagement to Chicago Youth

To launch the HIV prevention campaign for LGBTQ and minority youth in Chicago, PrEP4Teens created a mural and held a mini-ball.

More Chicago youth are going to be learning about [PrEP](#) to prevent [HIV](#), thanks to PrEP4Teens, a new social awareness and mobilization campaign that’s creating artwork in public spaces. The initiative launched in November with the unveiling of its first mural.

The artwork hangs at [TaskForce Prevention and Community Services](#) in Austin, a neighborhood on Chicago’s West Side. Local artist and advocate David Gauna designed the mural with input from area youth during workshops at TaskForce, which serves LGBTQ+ young people of various genders and sexualities.



*Chicago artist and LGBTQ community advocate David Gauna led workshops with local youth to create the mural, Courtesy of PrEP4Teens. David recently appeared in the [September 2023](#) issue of *Open Doors*.*

In addition to community events, such as mini-balls and art workshops that engage youth, the PrEP4Teens campaign includes a website in English and Spanish, [PrEP4Teens.com](#), that offers all sorts of relevant information about PrEP, such as how to find a health care provider, prepare for doctor’s visits and navigate insurance coverage.

A key component of the campaign is the creation of collaborative, teen-guided community art, such as murals, that position PrEP as an empowering choice for sexual health and wellness. Each mural includes art and messaging developed by and for teens.

The PrEP4Teens initiative is a collaborative effort between Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine’s [Institute of Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Wellbeing](#) (ISGMH), TaskForce Prevention and Community Services, Jim Pickett Consulting, AIDS Foundation Chicago, University of Chicago, Lurie

Children’s Hospital and other local organizations, according to a [Northwestern press release](#).

“I’ve heard from thousands of teenagers who want but aren’t getting the education they need to make empowered, informed decisions about their health and their bodies. And sexual health information isn’t always developed with teens’ needs in mind. We need to change this now, and in a big way, and the PrEP4Teens campaign aims to be part of that,” said Kathryn Macapagal, a chief investigator at ISGMH and a PrEP4Teens representative, in the press release. “It’s been an honor to work with incredible community partners, youth and artists who share the same vision, and we hope this is just the start.”



Youth unveiling the first PrEP4Teens mural they helped create at TaskForce in Chicago Courtesy of PrEP4Teens

PrEP is available as the daily tablets Truvada and Descovy and the long-acting injectable Apretude. For more details about the three PrEP meds, their side effects, generic versions, effectiveness and more, see the [POZ Basics on Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis](#) (PrEP).

In early 2023, the PrEP4Teens project received \$310,000 in funding from the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), the Alphawood Foundation, the Northwestern University Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute and the Third Coast Center for AIDS Research, [reports a blog post from Third Coast CFAR](#). The CDPH and Alphawood commitments enabled the project to move from research to implementation, providing resources to bring the research to life.

In Illinois, young people ages 13 to 24 represent the second-lowest proportion of [PrEP users](#) among all age groups, notes the blog post. The PrEP4Teens campaign aims to boost PrEP awareness and uptake among young people by educating them about the intervention, involving them in the creative arts, offering opportunities to have discussions and ask questions, and pointing to local clinics that feature teen-friendly PrEP providers

To Learn More Visit: www.PrEP4Teens.com

The site includes links to other resources to learn about PrEP and a list of teen-friendly PrEP providers in the Chicago area.



The finished PrEP4Teens mural at TaskForce in Chicago, Courtesy of PrEP4Teens



A successful evening - a view of the Mural from the street outside TaskForce's building

Meet the Changemakers



Leaders of PrEP4Teens campaign Jim-Pickett and Dr. Kathryn Macapagal | Photo Credit: Amina Sergazina / Staff Reporter, Austin Weekly News



Dr. Christopher Balthazar is the Executive Director of TaskForce - the lead community-based organization on the PrEP4Teens project.



Teens who helped design the mural at TaskForce P4T Launch event

Resources:

Media release: March 29, 2023

[PrEP4Teens Initiative Receives Over \\$300K to Launch Social Marketing Campaign](#)

Media release: November 10, 2023

[PrEP4Teens Launches HIV Prevention Youth Awareness Campaign](#)

WBEZ Reset with Sasha-Ann Simons November 14, 2023

[New campaign teaches teens about drug that prevents HIV](#)

POZ Magazine: November 17, 2023

[PrEP4Teens Brings HIV Prevention Artwork and Engagement to Chicago Youth](#)

Austin Weekly News: November 17, 2023

[HIV prevention campaign spreads awareness through art, social media, mural](#)



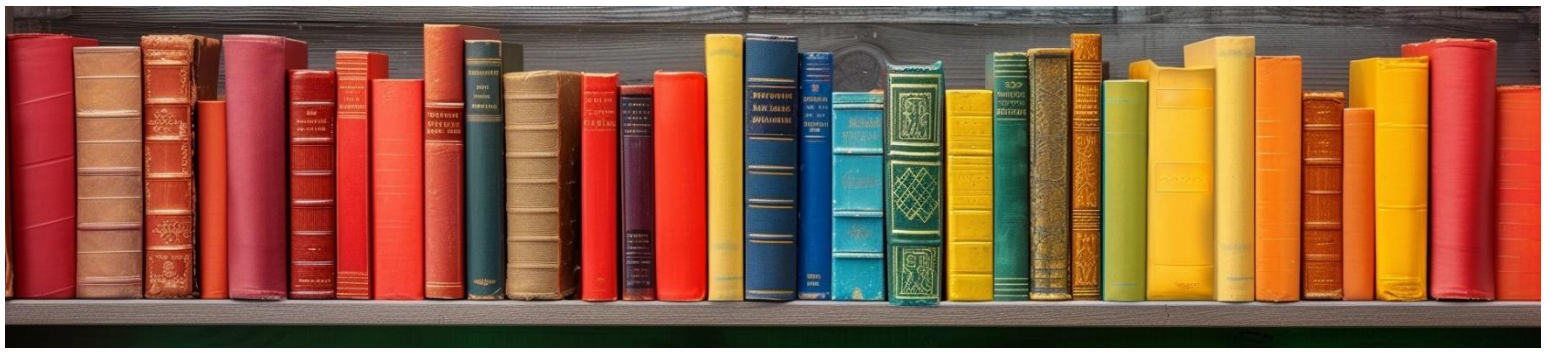
TaskForce staff at P4T Launch event



Executive Director Dr. Chris Balthazar – right with Paul Colby – Director of Operations TaskForce at P4T Launch



Check out PrEP4Teens.com for youth-friendly PrEP information and providers.



BOOK REVIEW

by **Andrew Zanevsky (he/him)**

Heather Hester's new book **Parenting with Pride** is a wonderful guide for parents of LGBTQ+ children. The author draws on her family experience of supporting her gay son and her experience as a coach, advocate, and podcaster. She provides valuable practical advice on navigating challenges, unlearning biases, and learning how to best support and advocate for an LGBTQ+ child. You will find practical exercises, including journaling, self-care, and information about additional resources. The book is full of love, the main force empowering parents on this journey.

Heather Hester was one of the panelists at our 2022 PCNI Conference, and we published her article on page 8 of the **December 2022** issue of Open Doors. You may find her podcasts and other resources on her website <https://chrysalismama.com/>.

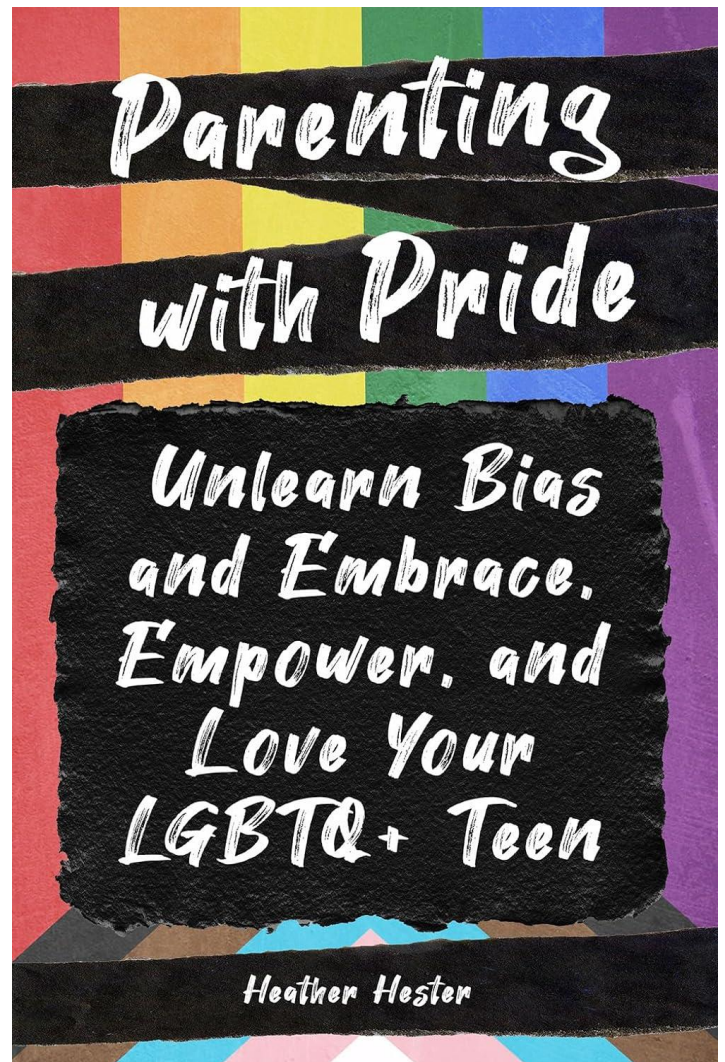
From the Publisher:

Your kid just came out to you, and amid the flurry of emotion or worry you might feel, you know you would do anything to protect their health and happiness. And you are not alone! Heather Hester, coach, advocate, and host of the #1 rated podcast, Just Breathe: Parenting Your LGBTQ Teen, combines an honest retelling of her own son's coming-out experience with wide-ranging research, conversations with dozens of professionals, and the unique experiences of other families to provide the ultimate guidebook for parents embarking on this journey.

In **Parenting with Pride: Unlearn Bias and Embrace, Empower, and Love Your LGBTQ+ Teen**, Hester provides parents and caregivers with four transformations that gently, but purposefully, walk them through the four pillars toward fully

supporting and loving your LGBTQ+ child: Embrace, Educate (or Unlearn), Empower, Love.

With trustworthy information and an accessible, straightforward plan, **Parenting with Pride** provides actionable yet profound tools and mental shifts to help parents support their teens and themselves and to be a catalyst for change in their communities.



224 pages. Publication date – June 4, 2024

[Pre-order on Amazon](#)

EDIT **BRAVE SPACE ALLIANCE**
HEALTH. HOUSING. FOOD. DIGNITY.

CHICAGO AREA TRANS SURVEY

Do you identify as Trans+ or Non-Binary, are at least 18 years of age, and reside in Cook County, IL? If so, we invite you to take the Chicago Area Trans Survey (CATS)! We'd like to hear about your personal journey and unique experience as a TNB person living in Cook County as well as learn about what the issues and current needs of TNB people living in Cook County currently are.

CATS Study ID #: STU00220418
Principal Investigator: Dr. Gregory Phillips II

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE SURVEY](#)

PFLAG Resource: Our Children

When an LGBTQ+ loved one comes out, PFLAG is here! Our Children is a handy resource with useful knowledge, helpful tips, expert opinions and more about what to do when a loved one comes out. A must read for anyone looking to learn more about how to support LGBTQ+ loved ones or looking for support for themselves. Download the publication or purchase copies on the [PFLAG National website!](#)



RESOURCES FOR COUPLES

PFLAG NYC hosts a virtual Partners support group.

The Partners Group is dedicated to the needs of partners and transitioning partners who are transgender or non-binary people. Like all of PFLAG NYC's support groups, it is peer-led and gives space for individuals in relationships where someone has come out as trans or non-binary to share with others of similar experiences.

The Partners Group meets on the third Thursday of every month from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. ET.

Register here to attend:

<https://www.pflagnyc.org/online-registration/>

Support group on Facebook for couples in which one partner is transitioning:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/524283204300774>

Website for spouses of transgender people:

<https://ourpath.org/resources-for-partners-of-trans-people/>

RESOURCE #PFLAGProud

OUR CHILDREN

Questions and Answers for Loved Ones of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual+, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning People

PFLAG



4th Annual Building Inclusive Community Conference



Keynote Speaker: Dr. Rachael Mahmood

With humor, vulnerability and insight, Dr. Mahmood will share lessons from her life and experience as an educator on how we can create spaces that foster a sense of genuine belonging for all.

Workshops to choose from include:

Transgender Allyship, Disability Etiquette, Bystander Intervention, Judaism/Anti-Semitism, Coping with Stress, Hate Crimes, Bridging Political Divides, Equity in the College Journey, and more.

Plus Poet Luis Tubens will share some poetry, LTHS Steppers will perform and youth will lead small group discussions based on what an inclusive community means to all of us.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2024
9:00A-1:00P | LTHS SOUTH CAMPUS
4900 WILLOW SPRINGS RD.
WESTERN SPRINGS, IL

ALL ADULTS & HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS ARE WELCOME

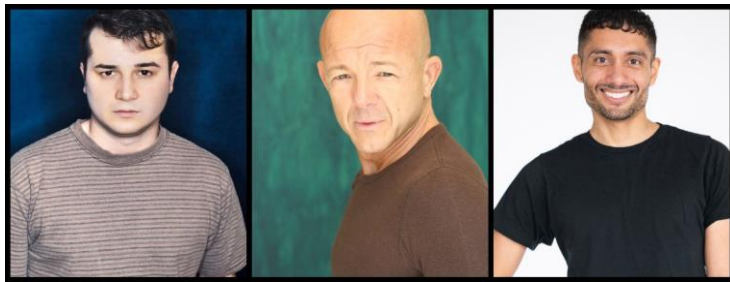
Lunch sponsored by

[Register Here](#)
<http://tinyurl.com/BICCRag24>

Questions?
cathyp@theleadershop.org



THEATER, FILM

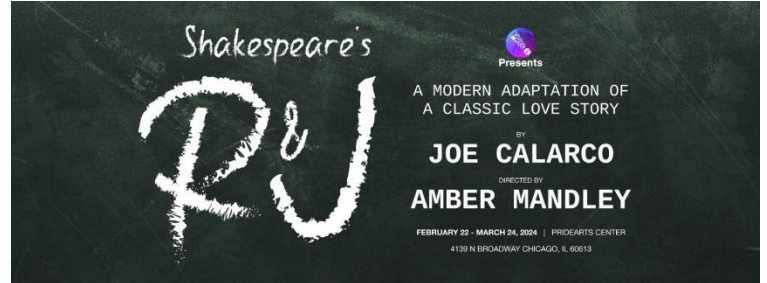


SUNSETS ON THE BEACH by Cal Yeomans, a long-lost drama by an early pioneer, was last performed at the 1982 American Gay Arts Festival in Chicago and offers an intimate exploration of human sexuality and relationships from the pre-AIDS era.

Act One is a monologue featuring Henrietta, an aging drag star whose life has taken a turbulent turn. This character's journey delves into the complexities of gay life with heavy yet authentic language. Act Two explores the relationship between Dan, a married construction worker on a quest for self-discovery, and John, who prefers anonymous hookups.

The production contains nudity. Performances are Friday and Saturday at 7:30, and Sunday at 2.

[Buy Tickets for SUNSETS!](#)

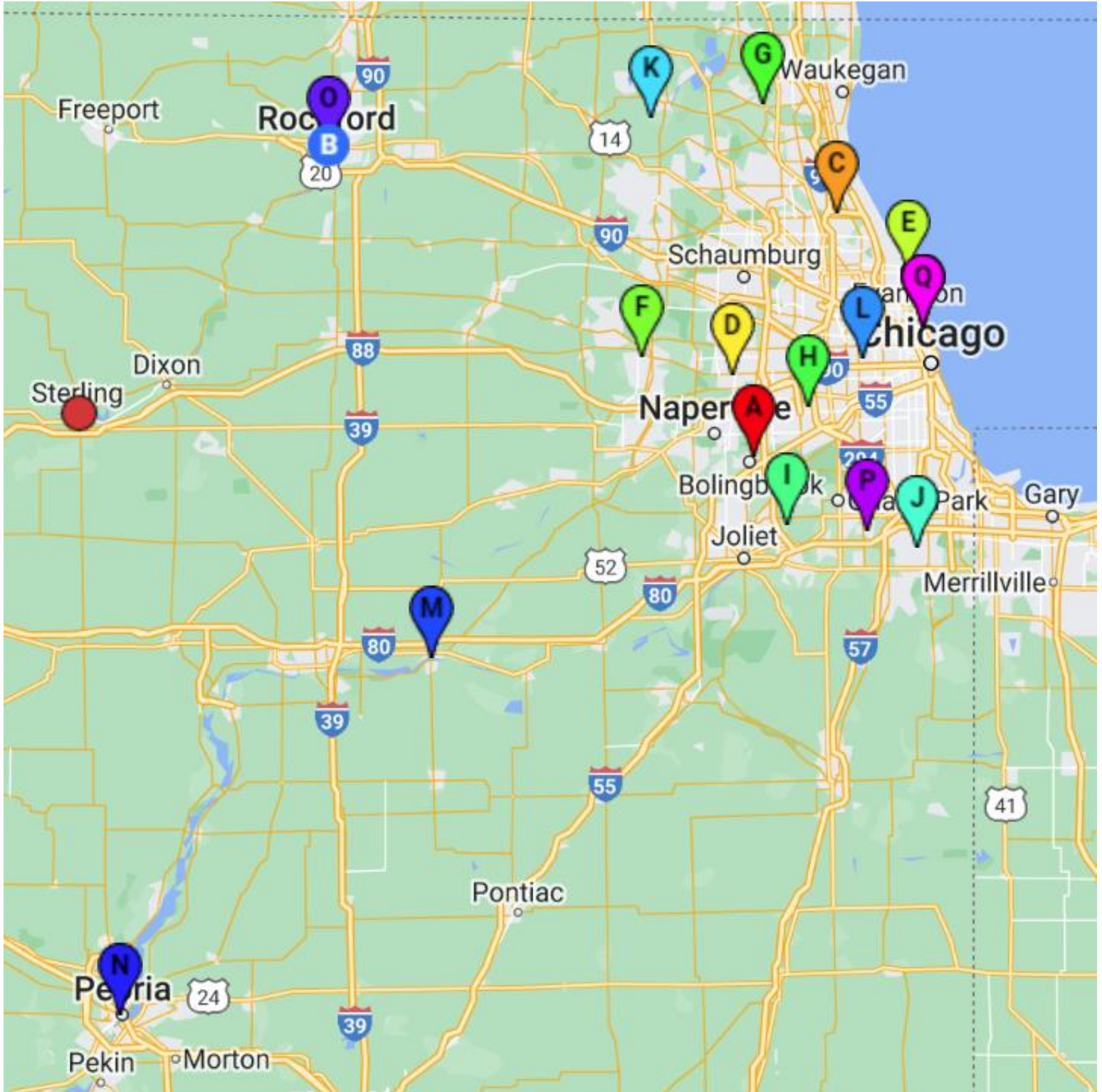


SHAKESPEARE'S R & J

Four young prep school students, tired of going through the usual drill of conjugating Latin and other tedious school routines, decide to vary their very governed lives. After school, one breaks out a copy of William Shakespeare's ROMEO AND JULIET, and they all take turns reading the play aloud. The Bard's words and the story itself are thrilling to the girls, and they become swept away, enmeshed in the emotion so much so that they break school rules in order to continue their readings. Perceptions and understanding are turned upside-down as the fun of play-acting turns serious, and the words and meanings begin to hit home and universal truths emerge.

[Buy Tickets for Shakespeare's R & J](#)

PFLAG Northern Illinois Chapters



Click/tap anywhere on the map to open it online and find meeting dates/ times/locations. Some chapters are meeting online on Zoom, and some are returning to in-person meetings. Contact the chapter for details before your very first meeting and watch for chapter announcements if you are a member.